

For The Love of Gears!

Digital sculptor extraordinaire Tom Longtin has always had an interest in gears. The aesthetics of their motion and interaction have been appealing to the sculptor/graphic designer based in Bennington, Vermont. So much so, he's created several award-winning animations on the subject.

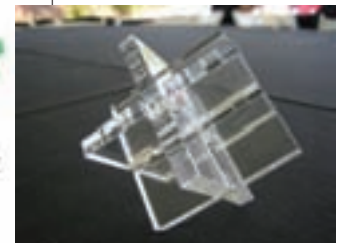
As a computer programmer for Cranston/Csuri Productions in Columbus, Ohio, Longtin created several surreal gear designs for a variety of computer graphics applications. An ad agency for an aerospace/automotive manufacturer asked Longtin and his co-workers to incorporate gears into a 30-second television animation entitled, "The Best Idea in the World."

He created a full-screen field of 50-odd metallic synchronized, rotating gears using the book "Spur Gears," by Earle Buckingham as reference. The commercial spot won Best Corporate TV Commercial by *Computer Pictures* magazine in 1985. In addition, Longtin's work has been featured on magazine covers and his animations were used on Miramar's *The Mind's Eye* video.

Longtin enjoys creating 3D sculptures in wood and plastics. As a designer, he appreciates the role gears played in the industrial revolution and their use in nearly every mechanical device known to man.

"Most people readily identify with the iconic status of gears," says Longtin. "You can see this in the graphic caricatures seen in many advertisements."

Longtin belongs to a local artist guild in Bennington that promotes his work. When he came across instructions for constructing puzzles on Pavel's blog at www.keltis.us/puzzles, he decided to create and sell a few basic puzzles of his own using laser-cut MDF board and acrylic. He then moved on to a six-piece 3D apple puzzle and a pumpkin puzzle by rounding out the perimeters of the three intersecting squares using *Rhino* software.



"Having a long history of producing gear-themed images and animations," Longtin says, "it followed that I should do a puzzle with gears."

And so he did.

Longtin sells the laser-cut yellow expanded polystyrene models for \$10 and can fill order requests via e-mail. He'd also be more than happy to provide the puzzle layout for free so fellow gear afi-

cionados can make their own.

Currently, he's hard at work on a gear-themed peace symbol car magnet and contemplating future gear-related projects.

For more information on Longtin's work, visit <http://design.osu.edu/carlson/history/ACCAD-overview/overview4.html>. To contact him for your own gear-themed puzzle e-mail Tom Longtin at tom-longtin@fulcrum-design.com